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564 773 so badly that they dropped the *palki* in which the girl was being carried, and ran away as fast as fast as they could. The poor girl was at the mercy of the tiger, who brought her to the boy, and gave her to him to be his wife. The tiger then released the boy from his forest life and together the new couple left the jungle and went to Sheori who was the boy's relative, as his mother belonged to Sheori's family. The offspring of this couple became the Binj Kols.

These two stories do not even make the same point but both probably preserve certain traditions: one of a connection with the Binj mountains and the other of some inter-marriage with jungle Baigas or Binjhwars.

564 [554] 4. *Khangar*. There is a distinct group of village watchmen and field labourers of low caste called by this name and found mostly in northern central India and in the United Provinces. The name is said to be derived from the words *khanā*, a pit, and *gar*, a maker or digger; because the Khangar digs holes in other peoples' houses for the purpose of theft. According to another account the name is derived from *khadgahar* meaning a Kshatriya or warrior, who earns his livelihood by means of a *khadga*, or sword.

177 793 554 583 851 171 With regard to Kol Khangars we were told that they were *purohits*, not making use of Brahmins or other Hindus in social events, such as marriage. They are considered low on the social scale and Rautiyas always avoid them. If a Rautiya girl elopes with a Khangar she can never be received back, and the offspring are Khangars. In Chota Nagpur there is a Khanger tribe which is a branch of the Munda group. The following story is told of their origin:

> Two Munda brothers were travelling with their wives from one place to another. One of the brothers and his wife preceded the other brother in the country. On the way, the former brother's wife was brought to bed of a child. While leaving the place the Munda couple buried the placenta etc., in the hearth which they had improvised at their temporary lodging. Soon afterwards, the other brother came up there with his wife. On opening up the hearth he discovered the placenta etc., buried there and thought that his brother had bagged some game and left a portion of the meat for him to cook and eat. And so the couple unsuspectingly ate the unclean meat. When the brothers met, and the truth was known, the brother who had eaten the unclean meat was excommunicated and his descendants became Khangars.[1]

1 Roy, S. C., *The Mundas and Their Country*, p. 401.

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woman, the smearing of a little *sendur* on her forehead, and the distribution of something to eat.

THE AGE FOR MARRIAGE. Because of the influence of Hinduism adult marriage among the Kols is not so much the rule as it is amongst certain more isolated Munda groups. The Kols generally recommend a fairly young age as the best for marriage. They told us that a boy should be married when between the ages of seven and ten and a girl when six or eight. Of course the young folks do not live together as man and wife at these ages; the actual consummation of the marriage occurs at the *gauna* time when the boy is twelve to fifteen and the girl ten to twelve. The practice of early marriage is deeply ingrained in the social thought of India in general for it has been the tradition and India is tenacious in its observances of this tradition handed down from ancient times. The usual reason advanced is that it protects both parties from promiscuous sexual relations. From their own reports the Kols give the impression that early marriages are very common among them, yet an examination of Census Reports does not seem to indicate that Kols are particularly addicted to early marriages. The report for 1931[1] lists eighty castes, tribes and races in the order of the incidence of child marriage. The Kols stand sixty-third on the list with only 3.4% of their married females being under thirteen years of age. At the head of the list are found the Golars, a nomadic shepherd group with 21.9% of their married females being under thirteen. They are a relatively small group. But the Telis, a "clean" Hindu caste of oil makers which has a large number of members in the Central Provinces, report 13.8%. The Brahmins in the same Province have 3.5% and thus the Kols come just below them. From this evidence it would appear that the Kols are not extreme in their practice of early marriage. However, the definition of marriage may be different and may refer to the time of actual consummation and the living together of the couple as man and wife.

KINDS OF MARRIAGE. For the Kols there is but one approved and genuine form though, as we have noted, there are cases where people are living together and recognized as man and wife without the performance of a marriage ceremony in the accepted sense. Among the Birhors Roy reports ten different kinds of marriages which are recognized as valid.[2] Among the Dudh and Dhelki Kharias he lists five types of recognized marriages: (1) Regular, (2) Elopement,

1 *Census of India*, 1931, xiii, p. 190.
2 Roy, S. C., *The Birhors*, pp. 144 ff.

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(3) Marriage by forcible application of vermilion, (4) Intrusion, (5) Widow.[1] 583

In discussing marriage with the Kols of Central India it was generally found that they recognized only one type of marriage. When asked about the remarriage of widows, they would say "yes", but indicated that while widows could remarry this was nevertheless a concession. A woman, they say, may be truly married but once; a man may be married several times. They know of the intrusion marriage (*Ghar baita*), and one of the stories in connection with the *kurbis* illustrated that form,[2] but it occurs very seldom. A Kolin may go and live as a servant in the house of a man she wants to marry. The man may take her to be his wife, but there is in this case no formal marriage ceremony; nevertheless he must feast the *panchayat* as a penalty. Kols claim that while they have heard of the *sendur* marriage, where the red mark is forcibly applied to the girl's head by her lover in some public place where it can be witnessed, they do not know that it has ever happened among the Kols. At least they professed ignorance of such an occurrence. The known types of marriage, including the elopement marriage which frequently occurs, are dealt with below. [587] [581] [357]

FORMS OF MARRIAGE PRACTISED BY KOLS: 1. *The Elopement Marriage* (*Bhagal*). This type of marriage may take two forms with variations in each. The first type is the least binding and has no recognized standing. If there should be a love match between a couple in the same village or a nearby village, who, because of parental opposition cannot easily be married, and no commitments have been made by the parents on either side to any other arrangement, the couple may decide to go off secretly together. They may go to some friendly relative's home in another village or perhaps will put up a grass hut in which they begin to live and thus start life as man and wife. The young man puts ten black bangles on the girl's wrists, some *sendur* on her forehead, and she is reckoned as his wife. Later on, should the young couple want to return to the village they may be allowed to live there provided that they give a feast as directed by the *panch*. It is unusual, however, that they get off so easily. However, if the young couple who elope are within prohibited degrees of relationship or if they are not of the same *kurbi* they cannot be received back into the community and must become virtual outcastes from those who know them. They will probably be forced to [835] [626]

1 Roy, S. C., *The Kharias*, p. 228.
2 See pages 35, 36.

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583 626 migrate to a place where nothing is known of their history, for if they should try to remain they cannot enter into the life of any community of that area unless they cast their lot with the lowest of the low.

583 586 623 The above form of the elopement marriage does not have the same standing as the regular forms. If such a union should break up, and the woman go to live with another man, the first man has no right to make a formal complaint to the *panch*, nor can he claim her nor any compensation for her. The *panch* takes no responsibility for irregular unions and this fact is a real deterrent. Marriage would thus seem to have the marks of a contract; it binds the two persons and gives certain proprietory rights which are enforced by the community.

583 585 837 623 The second type of elopement marriage attempts to regularize the procedure after a couple has eloped. In this manner a control over such cases is exercised, and certain obligations must be met or there is a severe social penalty. If a boy runs off with a girl already married, who has also been through the *gauna*[1] part of the total cycle, but who has not become the actual property of her husband, he is required by the *panch* to refund to the party to whom the girl was first married all the expenses in connection with the *lagan*, the *sadi* and the *gauna*. This is a very heavy burden which few would undertake to face, for it may amount to as much as a hundred rupees. And even if he is able to pay he still has to feast the *panch*, and they see that he does it well. Following all this the regular marriage ceremony must be performed with its additional costs and obligations, before the couple are allowed to live together. This makes such an elopement a very costly affair, and the *panch* is in the position absolutely to enforce these penalties.

[584] If the *gauna* has not yet occurred and the girl elopes with another boy, all he has to do is to pay a penalty to the *panch*, but before they are allowed to live together the regular *sadi* must be performed. No *gauna* is thereafter necessary and they begin to cohabit. The regulations are thus much more severe if the *gauna* is passed than if the elopement occurred before it. There are variations in procedure, but this seems to be the custom.

114 184 583 584 2. *The Recognised Form of Marriage* (*Biwah*, *Biyah*). The description which follows is one compiled from investigations made in many places. When we first learned of the marriage customs of the Kols who lived close to Jubbulpore, we thought that the customs

1 See page 93.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

among the Kols living out in the jungles and away from larger centres would be simpler. We were therefore surprised by how consistently various groups gave us similar information. It should be noted that it is not claimed that these customs are peculiar to the Kols. Investigation among the simple village people of Hindu background will probably show that all over this area there is a great similarity in the marriage customs, the details may vary, but not the main outlines.

(1) *Selection of the Girl.* When a father considers it time to arrange a marriage for his son it is he who should take the initiative. The first thing he should do is to make some private preliminary enquiries. It is against the custom for the parents of the girl to make any direct advances. In this type of marriage neither the boy nor the girl has anything to say concerning his or her future mate. It is entirely in the hands of the elders. The boy's father may ask some relatives in another village to be on the lookout for a suitable girl, and he will consult the *panch* of his own village to see if any one of them knows of a girl who would make a suitable match for his son. As a result two or three names are suggested as possibilities. The next thing that is ordinarily done is to try to catch a glimpse of the girl without her parents knowing about it. It is best if this can be done by the boy's father, but he may send some trusted member of the *panch* to carry out the investigations for him. If the results are satisfactory, the boy's father reports to his *panch* and asks them if there is any objection to such a marriage. This is done to guard against a marriage which would be objectionable from any angle. The *panch* is usually pretty well posted on matters of relationship, and its opinion, in the absence of written records (for such are never kept by Kols), is authoritative. The father of the boy then arranges to see the girl's father privately, and when he goes he usually takes three or four of his friends from his village with him. In the interview that follows he does not come to the point immediately, but may talk about general matters for some time before bringing up the main question. Mutual enquiries are made concerning the status of the two families, the health of the children, etc. The friends of the father vouch for the accuracy and truth of his statements. If both parties find themselves in accord and if the girl's father is willing to give his daughter, the matter is then with the girl's father and it is he who now consults his *panch* and makes any private enquiries that he sees fit. Up till this time the matter is considered as strictly private and if either of the parties is not satisfied with any of the details and does not wish to follow it up the matter may be dropped without prejudice.

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584 (a) *Negotiations.* If the girl's father, after enquiries, is fully satisfied the matter becomes one of real concern. The boy's father is informed of this and a day is set for him and his party of men (the boy and the women do not go and have no formal part) to go to the girl's house and start actual negotiations for the wedding since the matter is now no longer a secret. On the way to the girl's house this party 584 must be sure to take note of good or bad omens. If the latter are 787 frequent they may turn back and decide on a new start at a later hour or even on another day, if the omens have been particularly bad. To pass four people seated together is a good omen and to meet a Hindu *pandit* is another. But to meet a person with an empty vessel is a bad omen, as is also a meeting with a *teli* (oilman). A jackal about [825] to cross the road is a dangerous omen and one should make every attempt to head him off and to stop him from actually crossing the road. If it should occur, the best thing to do under the circumstances is to take a thorny branch, place it in the centre of the road at the point where the jackal crossed, put a heavy stone on top of the branch, and [789] with one foot planted on this stone roundly curse the beast. This will ward off the evil and save the person concerned from disaster.

It was noted that the groom-to-be does not accompany this party 584 nor does any female member of his family go to see the girl. The 574 party of men must take with them certain things, among them *dahi* (curds) kept in a new *markì* (earthenware vessel) which has been nicely whitewashed on the outside and has yellow symbols superimposed. The top is sealed with leaves and securely tied for it is eventually to be presented to the girl's father. They should also take *haldi* (turmeric, *Curcuma longa*) and *sendur* (vermilion). When the party arrives at the girl's village they are warmly greeted and brought to the house where the matter is formally discussed and much of the ground previously gone over privately is now publicly repeated. After a formal agreement has been reached by both parties the girl's father should ceremonially wash the feet of the boy's father, but another may do this if the father is unable to do so or is dead. This is a witness to 584 the fact that the matter is now settled and that the match is arranged. The boy's father should at this time make payment of the first in- 583 stalment of the price agreed upon in their discussions. The figure differs according to locality and is not uniform. It is divided into two parts, the first is paid on this visit and the balance just before the *sadi*. The following figures are typical, the first figure being the first payment: Rs. 8 and 4; 10-8-0 and 5-4-0; 9 and 4-8-0. The larger amount is paid first and half of it later. At Benda village it was claimed that there was no bargaining and that the price was fixed at

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twelve rupees, payable in two equal instalments. Two *saris* are often presented at this time—one for the girl and another for her mother. The washing of the feet and the payment of the bride price are definite expressions of the acceptance of the proposal. Nevertheless, the engagement thus sealed may be broken if either party is dissatisfied. If the girl's side breaks the engagement they must return the bride price and the presents. If the boy's side breaks it they are not entitled to any refund and the money may be kept by the girl's family.

(*b*) *Betrothal and Lagan.* The *lagan* is a letter given by the bride's father to the bridegroom's father, appointing the day of the marriage and ceremonies connected therewith and thus providing an outline for this part of the wedding cycle. The *lagan* should be prepared by the *pandit* of the girl's village or one selected by her family. When the time is ripe for the boy and girl to be formally married the Brahmin priest is called to the house or is informed of the proposal and is asked to write up the *lagan*. The *lagan* should have the complete programme for the *sadi* worked out after consulting horoscopes and taking into account auspicious or inauspicious seasons and circumstances. The best days for weddings are, in order, Monday, Saturday, Thursday and Tuesday, and the *lagan* will take this into account. The luckiest months are *Chaita* (March-April), *Magh* (January-February) and *Phagun* (February-March). After the *lagan* is written the paper is sprinkled with *haldi* water. Here is an actual example of a Kol *lagan*:

SHRI

Shri—may god Ganesh help us. Hari the lord was worshipped with *gur* (raw sugar) and *sendur* (vermilion). The son of Sali named Matukdhari has been selected as the bridegroom. May the lord make the marriage time auspicious.

On Wednesday, the sixth day of the bright fortnight of Magh, the marriage bower will be constructed; on Thursday, the seventh day, the anointing ceremony will take place; on Friday, the eighth, the bridegroom's marriage party will come and on Saturday, the ninth, the circumambulation of the marriage post will take place.

Written by Radha kunji
on the second day of the bright fortnight of Magh.
May all be auspicious!

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food made by boiling the pulse and the rice together. When this is prepared she offers each of the male guests a portion of it and they in turn give her from two to four annas which she is allowed to keep for her own use. Following this there is a big feast at the boy's house and the night is spent in chatting, singing and dancing. 585 [262]

(5) *Raman* or *Rauna:* Final Break with her Family. There now remains one more thing, which is the simplest of all to do: to bring the bride back for good. The *raman* is the last part of the cycle and is the taking possession of the girl and the bringing her for the last time to the bridegroom's house. The time for this is set by the *pandit* and there is said to be very little ceremony or no ceremony at all. The bridegroom simply goes with one or two male friends and the girl is brought back to his home in a *palki* and "they live happily ever after." She is now a member of the new household but may come and go at will between the two places. [592]

3. WIDOW REMARRIAGE: (*Kari hui*; *Path*). It is nevertheless well recognized that a widow may be married again though for the Kols such unions are not marriages in the strict sense. We were often told that while a man may be married more than once, a woman can be married not more than once. 587 [581]

The Kols recognize two possible forms of widow marriage: a widower marrying a widow and a bachelor taking a widow as his wife. The latter form is the least common. Some say that a union like this should never be dignified by the term marriage, for while a Kol bachelor may "keep" a widow he may never marry her and the union has no legal standing. Others call it but half a marriage. Such a liason is never allowed if the Kol bachelor is living in his parents' home; it is only after he leaves the home that such a thing is possible. As long as this widow is kept by him the *panch* sees that he does not contract a real marriage with anyone else. [583] [836] [581] [623]

There are, however, traces of a sort of legalization of this procedure, but this really consists in first making the Kol a widower! If he wishes to marry the widow he must first consult the *panch*. They will usually do their best to try to dissuade him, but if he persists they tell him what he will have to do in the way of penalties. If he is willing it has to be ascertained whether the girl also is agreeable. If she is not, the thing is off, but the Kol youth would probably not have made the request without being sure of her consent. The *panch* then arranges a mock wedding for him, and he is "married" to some inanimate thing. There are several forms possible; one is that the bachelor should be made 587 588 [623]

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Kya jano maya sukhi ke khanewale.
Garwa bhaiae apa ke liye—garwa ka ghaiana,
Kya jano tumari ke pinewale.
Biriya banaewa apa ke liya—biriya ruchana,
Kya jano mayapatia ke khanewale.
Seja bichhaonwa apa ke liya—sejiya sona,
Kya jano gudri ke sonewale.

O dwellers in jungle, what do you know of singing and music?
I have cooked for you,—but how poor you make it out, for you have dry food always.
I have water ready for you,—but alas, will it please you? You who drink water from gourds?
Pan is ready too,—but you who use the leaves of the forest, can you enjoy this tender treat?
A bed is ready for you,—but tell me true:
How will you ever rest on such, O sleepers on rags!

535 [462 562] DANCES. Dancing is found in connection with all happy occasions: births, weddings, feasts and festivals, but among the Kols it is only the women who dance. The men play and sing, but it is universally claimed that they never dance; it is considered effeminate to do so, for eunuchs dance, and since Kols are men they should not dance. In other groups among whom the Kols live, such as the Gonds and even the outcaste groups, the men-folk dance.

There is one main type of dance among Kols called by the same name as the songs that are sung with it: the *dadra*. There are various forms of this dance, differing somewhat in rhythm and also in movement. To the casual observer they look almost the same, but to the Kol there are real differences. The *purani chal* and the [578] *shaitani* are forms of the *dadra*. The word *shaitani* is literally 'satanic' or 'devilish' and in this form the words sung are very abusive and suggestive. On the occasion of such a dance with its accompanying [583] songs, youths and maidens often elope.

[77] The famous *karma* dance of the Gonds, in which both men and women participate, is not danced by the Kols, though they know of it and have often watched it. Russell and Hiralal however, claim [114] that the Kols dance it.[1]

1 *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 317.

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Dancing is invariably accompanied by singing and drumming. Liquor is often consumed in connection with it, and in one place, when seeking to see a dance, we were told that they would give an exhibition only if we bought them some liquor. The intoxicated state also lends aid to elopement.

The *dadra* dance is the most popular and most Kol dances are purely *dadras*. On such an occasion the men first gather around in the evening and sing and play for an hour or so. Finally a few women, one to six in number, put on the dancing costume over their *saris*, for without this they will not dance. This costume consists of two pieces: a red and yellow *lahanga*, which is like a dress made of many folds and is tied at the top so that the bottom just sweeps the ground, leaving the feet barely visible. The head is covered with the second portion, the *chunariya*, a shawl made of the same material as the *lahanga*. The shawl is thrown over the head and is held by the left hand so that when the person is standing erect the face is covered. On the feet are *ghunghunis*, ankle bracelets, which make a jingling sound.

After putting on the dancing costume, which is usually done right before those present, the dancers go and stand facing the players. If there are several who are to dance they do not necessarily go at the same time, and when they get there they do not keep together in their movements. While one is standing the other may be whirling. The dancers usually stand for some minutes in silence in front of the players who are singing to them and coaxing them to begin their dance. Then the knee is slightly bowed and the dancer begins to whirl. If one starts this movement in a clockwise direction, that direction is apparently followed by all the dancers, and the other direction is not taken. On the other hand, if they begin with the counter-clockwise movement then that is retained for the evening. On the whole the clockwise movement is favoured and is mostly used, but it is said that there is no hard and fast rule about it. The dancer may turn a number of times, but there is no set number of turns, it must fit into the song. The whirling is not particularly rapid, nor is it done on the heel. Having completed the revolutions the dancer stops, facing the drummers and the male singers, and begins her song. The men cease from their singing, but accompany her on their drums. As the dancer sings she moves by slow steps first to the left and then to the right, but not more than four or five feet in either direction from the original position. As the feet move the legs are shaken so that the anklets make a jingling sound. As a rule the shawl is held closed by the left hand, but when bending over the left hand is kept free, and it is used along with the